

Dear Co-Chairs McLain and Frederick, Members of the Joint Committee On Ways and Means Subcommittee On Education,

My name is Melissa Fothergill. I live in St. Helens and have three children, ages 6, 12 and 13. I am a parent representative on NW Early Learning Hub Governance Council and partner with our early learning hub as a Parent Navigator, helping connect families to preschool and child care opportunities.

I am writing to share my support for HB 5013 and the investments in it for Oregon's youngest children and their families.

Specifically, I want to share my support for:

*Investments to maintain stable funding for our statewide Early Learning Hub system.

*Investments in Oregon's early childhood WORKFORCE, FACILITIES, infrastructure, and increasing access to quality programs - especially access to culturally specific services funded by the \$10 million in the Early Childhood Equity Fund, programs that support strong families, and child care.

Last year, Oregon's Early Learning hubs connected over 5,000 families to a preschool slot, connected over 9,000 parents to parenting education services, connected nearly 6,000 families to home visiting services, and engaged over 270 parents in a role within the early learning hub. The early learning hubs therefore rely on a fully funded early childhood system to support their work of connecting families to services and ensuring they are provided in a coordinated fashion.

These investments continue to support our early childhood families and keep them engaged in the available opportunities. Early childhood having strong support ensures families are able to participate and maintain a community approach in the future. Being a part of Northwest Early Learning hub and the governance council allows me to help promote the available options to youth and their families. Providing parents and children with safe, secure learning and care facilities is extremely important to our local families.

This budget is truly an investment in Oregon's future. I urge your support for the critical investments in our statewide Early Learning Hub system, early childhood workforce, facilities Infrastructure, and increasing access to quality programs.

Thank you,

Melissa A. Fothergill